

# Making God Happy

by Jim Cymbala

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*To please God, we should live a holy life, avoid immorality, and love others, depending on the power of the Holy Spirit.*

**Duration:** 43:51

**Scripture:** 1 Thessalonians 4:1

**Topics:** "Pleasing God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the pastor discusses the negative influence of rap songs and the lewdness and suggestiveness of their lyrics. He emphasizes that money is at the root of this issue, as people pay for these records to be made. The pastor encourages the congregation to focus on pleasing God by loving and being kind to others. He also highlights the importance of minding one's own business and working diligently to earn a living. The sermon is based on the scripture from First Thessalonians 4:1-2, which instructs believers to live in a way that pleases God.

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## Transcript

I want to just exhort you this morning from God's Word. I want to be brief and to the point, because I think God's wanted us to worship and praise Him a lot this morning. How many just, your heart is still just bubbling with praise for the Lord and worship? It's just, you know, sometimes God just wants us to shut everything down for a little while and just praise Him.

First Thessalonians, I want you to look in your Bible, look at First Thessalonians, there'll be nothing on the screen right now. First Thessalonians 4, First Thessalonians 4, chapter 4 verse 1. Finally brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more, for you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.

What do we do to please God? It is God's will, it is God's will that you should be sanctified, that you should avoid sexual immorality, that each of you should learn to control his or her own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lusts like the heathen who do not know God, and then that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. Probably the implication is by getting involved with his, the brother's wife. The Lord will punish men for all, and women for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you.

For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a what kind of life? A holy life. Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man, but God who gives you his Holy Spirit. Number two, now about brotherly love.

We do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other, and in fact you do love all the brothers throughout Macedonia, yet we urge you brothers to do so more and more. Finally, make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, I didn't even know that was in the Bible, wow, and to work with your hands just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders, and so that you will not be dependent on anybody. Now look up here for a second, let's see if we can just cut to the chase quickly.

Paul is writing this wonderful church at Thessalonica, and he's telling them that he wants them as his converts, as his spiritual children, to live a life that pleases God. That means that it's possible to live daily in a way that pleases God and makes God happy, or by definition, it's possible to live as a Christian in a way that is displeasing to the Lord. He would have never taught them to live in a way pleasing to the Lord, if it wasn't possible to live in a way displeasing to the Lord.

And this brothers and sisters, can be a real tragedy to be a Christian, to know the Lord, and to live in a way that displeases Him, which then robs you of the joy and the peace that God wants for you and me, that grieves His Holy Spirit so that we don't get the grace that we need, receive the grace that we need. We lose, God is made unhappy, it's a lose-lose situation. So Paul says, I'm writing you in order that you would learn how to please God.

Now that He saved you, now that He did all these things for you, I want you to live to please Him. Notice the difference between the law and grace. The law, people who have a legal framework says, say this, if you don't live this way, you're going to go to hell.

They think that people will live right, because out of fear of going to hell. Grace says something else to it, says because God has freely given you the gift of salvation, because Jesus suffered on the cross for you and me, because He bore the nails in His hands, He took a spear in His side for Edwin and me. Christ gave Himself for me, Paul says.

How many of you are happy here today that Jesus hung on that cross just for you? Come on, wave your hand at me. Now, because He did that and because we are Christians, not in order to be Christians, you don't live right in order to be a Christian. Christianity, salvation is a gift, you can't earn it.

But since He has given us this gift, now let's live in a way, Paul says, that's pleasing to Him. This, brothers and sisters, means that Jesus has to be very personal to us. David and Nicole are married, Lisa's single, we're going to get her a guy here in New York, we're going to find her some nice Polish guy.

But let's say, let's say a guy, or Italian, yeah two, or anybody that God has for her, but let's say a guy begins to fall in love with Lisa, and they make a date, he'll pick her up at 10 o'clock in the morning, and they're going to spend the whole day together, have lunch, have dinner, and this guy really loves her, really starting to like her. The whole time that he's with her, he will be trying to do things to make her happy. He'll bring flowers, not too many men do that anymore, but it's a good thing to do.

Come on husbands, break down and give your wife some flowers sometimes. He will bring her flowers, and he'll say to her, where would you like to eat? I thought we could go to this Italian place. She'll say, I

don't really like Italian.

Okay, you don't like Italian, how about Chinese food, or how about a hamburger place, or you know, whatever you want. And he'll go out of his way to try to please Lisa in every way. If he brings something up about her family, let's say her life, and she says, I'd rather not talk about that.

He'll say, oh I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I shouldn't have mentioned that. In other words, everything will be geared around making her comfortable and making her happy, and it'll be personal. It won't be rules.

He'll be reading it as he goes from her reaction to things. Well, this is what Paul is saying, that the Christian life should be. That we live every day conscious that God is with us, and that at the end of the day, we want him to be smiling by the things we did, or the things we didn't do.

Notice, certain things that you don't do make God very happy. Certain things you do do make God happy, but notice the consciousness is that this is affecting God who gave me salvation. Not too many Christians try to live victoriously that way.

We have fallen in the trap of, I got to obey these 20 rules that I know are from the Bible, and you will never please God that way. There has to be the personal motivation of, he's done so much for me, I want to make him happy today. How many want to make God happy today? I mean, we can make him sad, or we can make him happy, obviously.

How do we make him happy? Let's just review it, and then we can pray. Look at, starting at verse, go to verse three, please. Notice, here's the first way that you can make God happy.

It's a negative. It's a negative that make God, that makes God happy. Notice, everybody look up here.

It is God's will that you should be what? Sanctified. That you should avoid sexual immorality. That each of you, men and women, should learn to control his own body that is in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lusts like the heathen who do not know God.

So, the first way that we can please God is by taking the temple that he gave us, which is our body. He's the Lord of the body. He died not only that we would have eternal life, he died so that we would live a certain way, and he would live inside of us, and that we would be his temple here on earth.

How many know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit? So, here's one way to please God. Whether it's heterosexual activity or homosexual activity, you are not to get involved unless you want to hurt God and end up hurting yourself, but the emphasis here is hurting him. I want you to get the motivation here.

Don't displease him by taking the body that he has made into his temple and doing dirty things with it, either physically or even in your mind. Now, in Thessalonica, that was part of the Roman Empire. It had been influenced by the Greek culture, which was followed by the Roman Empire culture, which was that homosexuality was rampant and number two, men kept mistresses in the house, in a room, living with the wife and the children.

When Paul the Apostle and the others went and taught that fornication was wrong, and fornication is any sexual activity outside the marriage bed. If you're single, you don't get intimate with anyone until you're married. That's what pleases God.

You might feel that it's a battle, but when you go to bed at night, he'll give you the grace, and when you go to bed at night, he'll be smiling at you for something you didn't do. Come on, do I get a witness here? You got to understand what was being said here. There are certain things that God is made happy with if you don't do that.

My mother used to, because my sister used to annoy me, my mother used to say, she's here today, she'll remember, don't hit your sister. Live one day without hitting your sister, and when my father would come home at night, he would ask, how was he today? Did he hit his sister? Because my sister was younger and very annoying to me. So by not hitting my sister, I made my mom and dad happy.

By avoiding fornication, by avoiding all the pitfalls in a very sensual society, when Paul and Peter were preaching, especially Paul in the Roman Empire, that fornication was wrong, it would be like me telling you that to take a drink of Perrier or water or coffee is wrong. There was no concept that anything sexual was wrong. The gods that they worshipped were fornicators.

The gods they worshipped got over on people. So this was, this was a whole new thing, and this is what Jesus has established, that if we want to please Him every day, we're to avoid fornication. No matter what they tell you, no matter what the guy tells you, no matter what the girl says, it's wrong.

It grieves God. It hurts His feeling, and if we're Christians, we want to live in a way that pleases God. You want to please God? Notice, you don't have to preach a sermon from this platform.

You don't have to be a missionary. You don't have to read the Bible in a day. Notice one of the simple ways you can please God by, on a daily basis, avoiding immorality.

How many want to do it for Christ's sake? Come on, come on. Although there are temptations and urges, and the flesh will say, let it all hang out. Don't worry, God will forgive you.

You'll get married later. There's a thousand devices that Satan uses. Don't believe one of them.

Let's remember what God says, be holy for I am holy. Number two, go. Notice, by the way, anybody who rejects what I'm saying, let's just read through this again.

No one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish all for such sins as we have already told you and warned you. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.

And can I just say one thing? Notice, not, He did not call us to be impure, but what did He call us to live? What kind of life? A holy life. Brothers and sisters, is one of the lowest things in our society, that to make a buck, these so-called pseudo-sophisticated people will put any garbage on a record, with the filthiest talk, demeaning to women, with the filthiest words. And it's all justified, but let somebody mention the name of Jesus, and they're in an uproar.

But let them, let young people be exposed to the filthiest kind of talk. Just outright cursing, people are paying to be cursed at. Nicky Cruz, last time, a couple times a year, a couple years ago, he and I were together, and we went out to shoot billiards together.

It's something we do when we're together. And now they have billiard halls that are nice, family things, family-oriented all throughout the country, but in New York, it's a little more difficult. But we went to one near my home, and I didn't even know there was a jukebox there.

And while it was nice and quiet, it was in the afternoon, Carol was making rice and beans for dinner, and we're shooting pool, and somebody puts some money in the jukebox, and puts on one of these rap songs. We had to get up and leave, because every sentence was just like a four-letter word, just coming right at you. Everything's filthy in our society.

And you know what's at the bottom of it? A dollar. And these people who pay for these records to be made, and paid for the lewdness, and the suggestiveness of the lyrics, and all of that, when you say, does it hurt the children? No, freedom of expression, and all of that. But you know what's at the bottom of it? Money.

Money is at the bottom of it. They don't care what happens to the children, who are going to grow up around this garbage. But for us, it's different.

God has called us to live a holy life. And if you reject this, if you listen to me, but say, I'm still going to do my thing, you're not rejecting me. You're not rejecting me.

Look at verse 8. Whoever rejects this, does not reject man, but who? God, who gives us His. How will we live a holy life? By depending on the Holy Spirit. Number two, second way you can please God.

Here's something you can do, positively. Now about brotherly love, we do, we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. Notice, brothers and sisters, that you can learn certain things through teachers, but other things you can learn, taught directly by who? By God.

You have been taught by God. There are some instincts that God puts in you. He's teaching you what to do, even though it hasn't even been instructed to you very plainly.

This is what was happening in this case. Now Paul is re-emphasizing it. And he says, one of the ways to please God is to love the brothers.

But I want to go further. Not just the brothers from your island, or your country, or your color, or your church, or your denomination. Because a lot of people love that way.

But he goes further. And in fact you do love, how many of the brothers? All the brothers throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you brothers to do so, what? More and more.

So what does that tell us? It's the test of love, is to let God's love go out to everybody. Not just the people from your little culture. Give your culture a rest.

Oh, so you like roti? I like it too. But give it a rest, all right? And have a hot tamale, or have some Asian food, or get over who you are. And let, look at people the way God looks at them.

Because God loves all the people in Macedonia. So Paul says, I am so happy that you've been taught by God, not to love the people in your church, but all the believers in Macedonia. And when I go out and speak, boy, do I learn things, and do I observe things.

That a lot of times I'm in denominational gatherings, and people don't know who I am. And I'm eating in a luncheon, and they're talking to me, and they don't know I'm speaking later that night. And they say, hi, who are you? Where are you from? What church? And are you a member of our? Oh, you're not.

And they'll turn away, and just ignore me the rest of the meal. God doesn't want us to do that. How many say amen? To love everybody, of every race, of every background, especially brothers in Christ, about brotherly love.

He's talking now about loving believers. And some believers are hard to love, because they're ornery and abrasive. But God says, through the same Holy Spirit that will keep you living clean, that same Holy Spirit will give you love.

And that love can increase, even if you're loving everybody now, like William and Carolyn. I find them very loving people. God says, you can do so more and more.

You can do so more and more. You've reached the end of side one. Please turn the tape over and rewind to the beginning of side two.

Love can increase. You can't content yourself and say, I love, I feel like I love a lot of people. How many feel like God has put His love in you? Come on, lift your hands.

God's put His love in you. Come on, how about the rest of you? What's wrong with you? Let me see your hands. How many feel God has put His love in you? Some of you don't have your hands up.

Well, God has to work with you. But we're called to love. We're saved because of His love.

What are we going to turn around and hate after God loved us so much to give His Son on the cross? It's impossible, brothers and sisters. By this shall all men know you're my disciples, because you what? Love one another. Not carry a Bible or call yourself Baptist or Pentecostal or pray for the sick or speak in tongues.

That's not how people know you're Christians. Here's how they know you're Christians. Because you love one another.

I told you about this man who visited here about six months ago in this very building. And I'll come to a close on this. He sat among you.

I didn't know he was visiting from another church. I had been warned that a visitor was coming, a leader of a church in the state of Kentucky. And this church has the best Bible teachers in America coming to it, evangelical speakers.

So someone had asked me the favor to meet this older man and his wife and pay respects to them. A friend asked me to do it. I said I'd be happy.

So I'm walking out the side at the end of the service. Craig, Willie, whoever was with me, I said hello to them. I said, come up to my office.

You know, we'll talk for a second. Well, I could tell they'd both been crying. And from their body language, something told me or I discerned that they had never sat in an audience which is as international, as interracial as this.

But something was happening. I could tell they were broken. God was doing something.

We went up to my office. I was not looking for trouble. I just wanted to encourage them.

I said to them, well, how are things going in your church? Well, our pastor is leaving. He's been there 37, 38 years. We're getting a new pastor.

So how's the church going? Well, it's right now in a low ebb. But so I said, well, they were fidgeting, both of them on the sofa there on my office. Maybe the new pastor that God sends in will give you the right leadership.

But they were under conviction. Something was going on. So the man just looked at me, who's the head of the elder board there, and said, of course, we don't allow black people in our church.

I said, what? What did you just say? He said, oh, there's no sign, but they know. I said, then I take back what I said. A plague on your church.

That's the truth before God. A plague on your church. You need to get saved.

And what kind of Bible teachers come into your church and all these supposedly good Bible teachers and you don't love other human beings? I said, let me get this. Christ died for a black person or Latino or whatever. Christ died for them and hung on the cross and you don't want them to come into your church.

You're preaching about Jesus, but you don't have the love of Jesus. No wonder your church is in a dip. It should close down.

And that's how deceptive religion can be, brothers and sisters. You can come to this church and think you're making progress. You're not, unless you're loving more.

The only acid test of Christianity is love. And that's how we can please God every day. Just by loving people.

You don't have to climb a mountain. You don't have to give a million dollars to a cause. Just love people.

And love is patient. Love is kind. You want to make God happy? Just be patient with people.

That's hard to do. How many know it's hard to be patient? Sometimes you want to just tear your hair out with people. But God says, this is a way to please me.

Not only love the brethren, the sisters, but increase in that love. Be more patient, more kind. That's how you can make God happy.

You want to make God happy today? Just love people. Be kind. Lastly, finally, make it your ambition to lead a what kind of life.

And to mind your own business. Let's say those five words together. Why are you laughing? Brothers and sisters, why are you laughing at me? You're laughing like I made this up.

Pastor Bogstev, is this the word of God? Read it with me. To mind your own business. And to work with your hands.

In other words, earn your own living. Unless there's physical or other reasons, you should never be living off the state, off the city. Welfare is a great thing for people who must have it.

Otherwise, you have to work with your own hands. You don't get over on the society. That's not what a Christian does.

That's what the world does. Because everybody, like there's a whole culture of get over on the system. Am I right brother Paul? Paul knows this better than anyone.

Paul, is there a whole mentality in this country of get over? Find ways to get over. And then the people who really need it get less. That's wrong.

Christians aren't supposed to be lazy. You want to please God today? Again, you don't have to preach a sermon. You don't have to read the whole book of Revelation.

Just work. And mind your own business. Now, what do you, wait, wait, wait, stop, stop.

Why are you clapping? It's in the Bible. You're acting like I'm preaching that. I'm not preaching it.

I'm just telling you what's in the Bible. Isn't this amazing? Brothers, if you play, we can make God happy by minding our own business. Is that an amazing thing? Paul says, I'm writing to you so that you might know how to please God.

How? By living a holy life, no immorality, no physical sexual contact, no pornography. I don't care if you came from a background of homosexuality, you don't go back. Whom the son says free is free indeed.

Doesn't matter if you were a lesbian, doesn't matter. I don't care what you were. We all come from the same sewer.

It doesn't matter what we were, but we've been washed. We've been cleaned. We've been sanctified.

Amen. Come on, let's put our hands together. Jesus has made us new.

Come on, everyone. Let's put our hands together. He's made us new.

Now, so live a holy life. In other words, don't commit fornication, immorality. That makes him happy.

So today I can make him happy by just asking God to keep me. Number two, to love the brethren, all the brethren and sisters. Number three, to be busy and lead a quiet life.

Don't be getting involved in everybody's business and talking and being loud and getting involved in everything and judging everything. And I don't know what she sees in that man and what and all that stuff. And did you see what she wore? What's it your business what she wore? You watch what you wear and let her watch what she wears and don't be a busybody.

And you know what that does? It makes God happy. God is made happy and he's hurt when we are busybodies and when we mind other people's business. This is a simple word, but an important word.

Go back to the first verse, Michael. I want you to see this. Look.

Finally, brothers and sisters, brothers is used in the Bible to include both genders. We instructed you how to live in order to please God. When I was brought, when I was growing up in the church, my mom and dad took me.

No one ever told me that just by living a certain way, you could make God happy. You know what I was taught? If you fast for three days, God says, wow. Right? That's what I was taught.

And don't some of you look at me strange. You were taught the same way. You had some of the same ideas.

If you didn't in another setting, if you didn't eat meat on Friday, but if you don't eat meat on Fridays and you eat just fish and you're a busy buddy, you might as well have a big steak because it doesn't matter. Right? Here are the things that really matter to God. It's how you live.

Don't climb a mountain. See, you know, the people there in Central America and certain parts of Central America and in South America, especially in Mexico, I should say, they are taught to go to a shrine, to walk on their knees for a couple miles and their knees are ripped and bloodied and scarred and the blood and the pain they go through, they're taught that makes God happy because you're suffering. God doesn't want that masochism.

God just says, keep your vessel in securing a wife or a husband. Watch how you do it. Don't be messing with other people's mates.

And don't consummate until you're married. The sexual act is saved for marriage. Number two, love each other.

That makes me happy when you love each other. You know, when I see my grandkids loving each other, when I see my kids helping each other, that makes me so happy. God's the same way, more so.

And lastly, live a quiet life. Mind your own business. Support yourself.

Give to the work of the Lord. Use the monies that he's given you to bless his work. Let's pray together.

Lord, this is a different kind of message for us today. It's a message that makes us quiet. We want to please you.

I want a personal walk with you, Lord. I don't want to serve the, I'm not serving the Brooklyn Tabernacle. I'm serving you, Jesus.

Sometimes our church and our activities and our ministry becomes more important than you. David and Nicole and Lisa are not singing to make a living. They're singing for Jesus.

And we lose that easily, Lord. So we ask you to help us. We want to be conscious of you.

We give us a new awareness that the way we talk, the way we walk, the way we act, the things we do and don't do, they have an effect on you. And after all you've done for us, we do now out of gratitude for the salvation that you've given us. If there are people here, Lord, who are hurting you, forgive them and give them the grace to live a different kind of life that would make you happy.

Not in order to go to heaven. Salvation is a gift and we thank you for it. Christ died for us, the unjust.

He died for us, the ungodly. He bore our sins upon the tree. Not so that we would just go, Lord, watch our words so that our words don't display.

Watch the way we react and keep us from foolish jesting and filthy talk. Help us not to be seduced by any of Satan's devices. Whom the son sets free is free indeed.

Let love increase. Help us to not just love. People visit here and say, boy, your congregation loves and I've been shown more love in your church visiting than I have been shown in my home church in another state.

And Lord, I thank you for so many of those testimonies over the years. But we want more love one to another, Lord. We don't want to stop.

We want more love. We do sense your love among us, but we want to be tighter and more loving and kind. We want to support ourselves, other people's affairs and give our opinion.

We don't have to preach sermons in front of 5,000 people in order to please you. I want to do more to show my love to please you in everything. Warn us by the Holy Spirit.

Let us know, Lord, immediately, even when the enemy is seducing us away or we're making mistakes. Warn us, Lord. Show us.

Give us a check in our soul.

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